2024
ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT

IMPROVING ENVIRONMENTAL GOVERNANCE, TRANSFORMING LIVES









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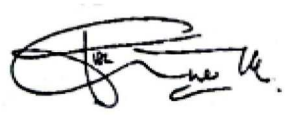
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Chairman's Statement

As we reflect on the past year, it's clear that perseverance and focus have been key to our success. The team at Friends of the Nation and our partners have demonstrated remarkable resilience in the face of challenges, and I am proud to say we've not only survived but thrived. We have made significant strides in establishing a strong presence within Ghana's civic landscape, driven meaningful change and progress, and our team's hard work and commitment have been instrumental to yielding notable impacts. This success is a testament to our team's dedication and hard work.

Our council has made a strategic decision to rebrand our actions, reaffirming our commitment to maintaining trust and challenging dominant narratives in the civic space. This change represents a powerful step forward in our mission. I'd like to extend my sincerest appreciation to our staff, partners, stakeholders, and the communities we serve. Your support and collaboration have been invaluable to our success. In the coming year, we will continue to build on our successes and explore new opportunities for growth and impact. We'll strengthen relationships with key stakeholders and expand our presence in the community, develop and implement programs driving meaningful changes and address pressing issues, and stay agile and responsive to changing circumstances, embracing new ideas and approaches that support our mission. We are committed to transparency and celebrating milestones with our community and allies. Our 2024 Impact Report showcases our journey, achievements, and vision – a deep dive into who we are and where we're going.

Thank you for your ongoing support and engagement. Together, we'll continue making a lasting impact on the environment and enhance the lives of those we serve.



Delasi Amable

Chairman – Council of Directors

Executive Director's Letter

A Transformative Year for Sustainable Development

2024 was a transformative year for Friends of the Nation, marked by significant milestones and achievements that propelled us closer to our mission of promoting environmental justice and sustainable development. Our concerted efforts to strengthen fisheries governance, promote sustainable fishing practices, and enhance the resilience of Ghana's aquaculture sector to climate change yielded impressive results, demonstrating the power of collaborative action.

We made significant strides in enhancing fisheries governance in Ghana, achieving a remarkable 75% success rate in prosecuting fisheries infractions between 2019 and 2024 in the Western Region. This milestone was made possible through our training initiatives for the marine police department of the Ghana Police Service, which equipped officers along Ghana's coast with the skills to effectively enforce fisheries laws and regulations. Our efforts to promote sustainable fishing practices also bore fruit as national TV and radio programs reached over 15,000 viewers and listeners, raising awareness about responsible fishing methods. Additionally, we empowered women cocoa farmers through training that enhanced their leadership, business, and financial management skills.

Our commitment to transforming internal revenue mobilization is evident in the Shama District Assembly's impressive 251.4% increase in revenue generated from property rates and licenses between 2019 and July 2024. As we reflect on our journey in 2024, we note the pivotal role that transparency, accountability, collaboration, capacity building, and community engagement play in driving sustainable development. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to our partners, including state agencies, the European Union, Oxfam, Oak Foundation, Ocean5, and other like-minded organizations, for their unwavering support and enthusiasm for our mission. We also pay tribute to our dedicated team, comprising staff, volunteers, community environmental monitoring and advocacy groups – (CEMAGs), and the school environmental monitoring and advocacy clubs (SEMACs). Their tireless efforts and commitment to our shared vision have been instrumental in shaping our success.

Furthermore, we acknowledge those who have challenged us through their diverse perspectives, roles, and opinions. Your contributions have provided us with invaluable opportunities for growth, reflection, and resilience-building.

As we embark on a new chapter, we invite fellow changemakers to join us in our pursuit of a more just and sustainable future. Our program will undergo a strategic evolution, focusing on environmental justice, ocean justice, livelihoods, and gender justice, aligning with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 5, 13, 14, and 16.

Our efforts will converge on the interconnected themes of natural resources, people, and prosperity, prioritizing the well-being of people, promoting decent work cultures, transparency, and accountability. We will foster strategic partnerships, collaborate with key stakeholders, and empower local communities to drive transformative changes.

We remain steadfast in our commitment to transparency, accountability, and promoting sustainable livelihoods. We will continue to advocate for policies that prioritize the long-term sustainability of Ghana's natural resources.

Thank you for your unwavering support as we embark on this exciting new chapter. Together, we can co-create a more equitable, just, and sustainable future for all.



Donkris Mevuta

Executive Director

Introduction

Profile of the Organization

History, Vision, and Mission

Friends of the Nation (FoN) is a socio-environmental non-profit advocacy organization established in 1993 and registered in 1994. It is headquartered in Sekondi-Takoradi in the Western Region of Ghana and has field offices in Accra, Keta, Yendi, Ejura, Sefwi-Wiawso, Techiman, and Donkorkrom. FoN works in coastal, forest, transitional, and savannah regions, and the mining hubs of Ghana.

FoN envision the management of the environment in a sustainable and healthy manner and with equal access to and use of natural resources by communities.

FoN advocates and initiates vibrant campaigns against environmental degradation and depletion of natural resources; builds and strengthens the capacities of peoples, local communities, and institutions; and networks with like-minded organizations locally and globally. In addition, the organization undertakes and disseminates research findings and facilitates knowledge transfer to inform actions and campaigns.

OUR CORE VALUES

- **Participation:**
  FoN believes in a people-centered development and rights-based advocacy that involves and enables inclusivity in our actions. We consider diverse perspectives and consciously mainstream those perspectives in our works.

- **Accountability:**
  FoN is accountable to all stakeholders and society at large. Our works and records are open to public scrutiny especially through our actions and with proper regard for the confidentiality of private information.

- **Gender Inclusivity:**
  FoN abhors discrimination in all forms particularly based on sex, gender, and social identity; and we guarantee and offer equal opportunity for both males and females in any endeavor. We treat one another with the respect that one desires for oneself in the affirmation that unless everyone does that, society cannot flourish.

- **Self-reliance:**
  FoN is self-reliant, and we maintain our independence and focus on the vision of the organization.

2024 Interventions under Programme Areas

Table 1: 2024 Interventions under Programme Areas

Programme Area	Project Name	Donors / Partners
Natural Resources and Assets Governance	Improving Fisheries Governance in Ghana (IFG).	Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors, Inc. through Oak Foundation and Ocean 5, Environmental Justice Foundation, Hen Mpoano, Trygg Mat Tracking (TMT), Fisheries Committee of the West Central Gulf of Guinea (FCWC).
	PVP Fair for All - Agriculture and Extractive Value Chains in Ghana	Oxfam

Climate Change and Environment	Research for Development and Innovation Agriculture and Learning Action (ReDIAL)	European Union, Implementing Partners: FRNR- KNUST, Tropenbos Ghana, SESI Technologies and SAYeTECH Company Limited.
	Climate Media Collaboration for Economic Justice and Community Rights	Oxfam
	Strategic Partnership Initiative for Ghana and West Africa	DANIDA, Oxfam.
Community Development	Promoting Progressive Taxation and Tax Compliance in Ghana.	Oxfam and Hewlett Foundation.
	Women Economic Advancement for Collective Transformation (WEACT).	Global Affairs Canada, Oxfam, Send Ghana, WiLDAF Ghana.

Beneficiaries (Gender) Engaged in 2024

In 2024, FoN directly engaged a total of 15279 comprising of 8479 males and 6800 females representing 55% and 45% respectively. The distribution of beneficiaries by sex and thematic area is respectively illustrated in Figures 1 and 2 below.

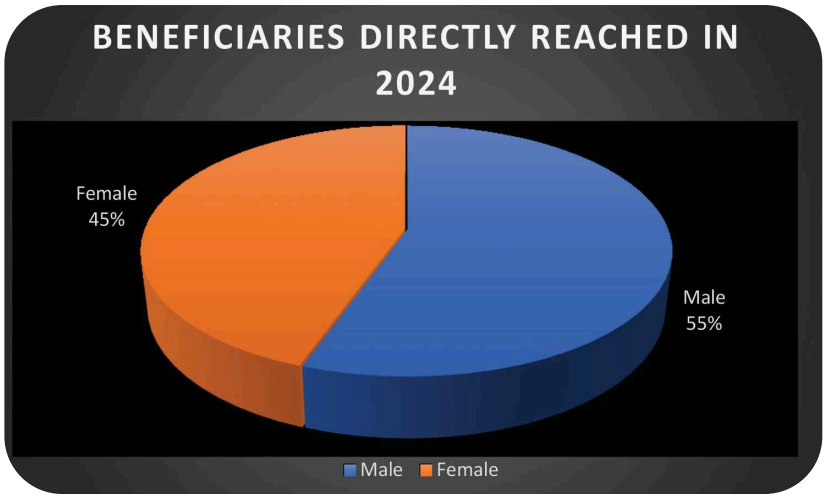


Figure 1: Beneficiaries (Gender) engaged per program area

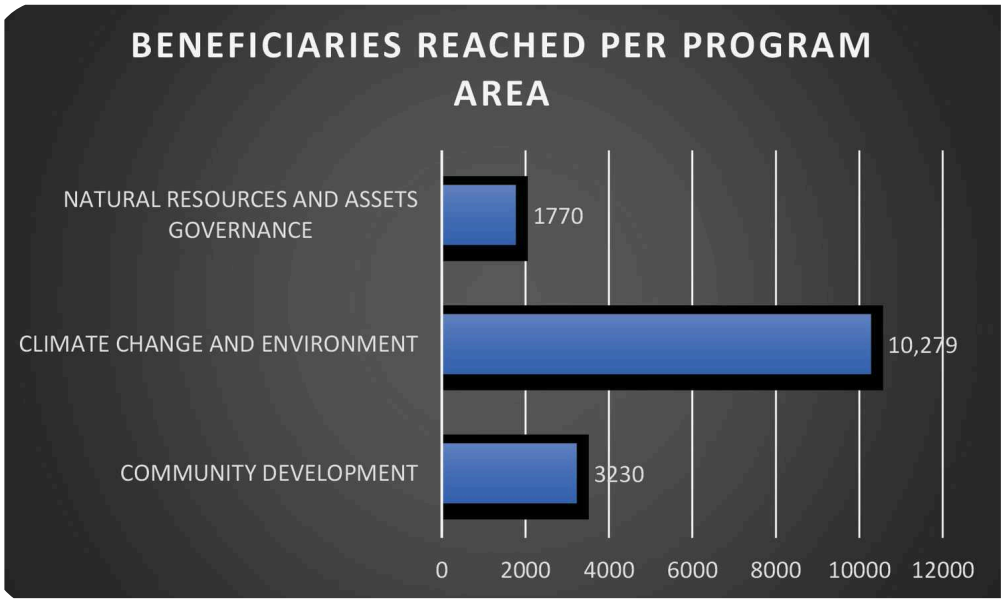


Figure 1: Beneficiaries engaged per program area

SUMMARY OF KEY IMPACT UNDER THEMATIC AREAS

Natural Resources and Assets Governance

Fisheries

- Media Engagements on the importance of sustainable fishing practices and the negative impacts of IUU fishing on coastal communities reached over 5,000 viewers and listeners.

- FoN established core team of trained Marine Police Officers who served as key facilitators, sharing their knowledge and skills with peers and personnel from various agencies to Strengthen Ghana's fisheries prosecutorial chain.

- FoN's monitoring of IUU cases in court showed that between 2022 and 2024, out of 24 fisheries infractions, nine (9) were being prosecuted. Fourteen (14) got resolved, and one (1) was under investigation. Of these numbers, 17 emanated from the Western Command, and the remaining 7 originated from the Eastern Command of the Marine, Ports and Railways department of the Ghana Police Service.

- Despite our progress in combating IUU fishing, our takeaways from the fight against IUU fishing indicated that challenges persist due to weak coordination between enforcement agencies and the judiciary, insufficient funding, and limited trained personnel. Coastal communities require persistent education and awareness-raising efforts that promote ocean literacy, emphasizing the ecological importance of fisheries regulations and the interconnectedness of human and ocean health.

- FoN collaborated with top executives from the National Fish Processors and Traders Association (NAFPTA) and the Ghana National Canoe Fishermen Council (GNCFC) to conduct an organizational health check. This support enabled them to improve their governance, management, and advocacy capacities, placing them in good standing to effectively represent the interests of their members.

- Strengthened the marine bycatch network, training 21 active members in cetacean identification and digital data collection. This enabled real-time data collection and tracking of cetacean landings, bridging data gap in Ghana's marine conservation efforts.

Mining

- Built the capacity of the stakeholders in the lithium catchment areas such as the management members of the Mfantseman and Abura Asebu Kwamankese District, traditional leaders, land and crop owners on land rights, sustainable environmental governance, livelihoods protection, and how to negotiate for a fair and adequate compensation.

- rained subnational governments in lithium catchment areas on the importance of effective use of mineral revenue and the principles of transparency and accountability in minerals revenue management.

- Empowered 192 citizen groups to monitor and influence gender-responsive budgeting and ensure equitable allocation of mineral revenues. These citizens were able to track mineral revenue allocations which revealed shortcomings in community participation and transparency.

Environment and Climate Justice

- Partnered with Africa Centre for Energy Policy (ACEP) and collaborated with the Ellembelle District Assembly and Fisheries Commission-Western Region to support 31 fish farmers in building their resilience to climate change. Through training and capacity-building, farmers were equipped with innovative strategies to mitigate the impacts of climate change, including the use of climate-resilient infrastructure and sustainable fish farming practices.

- Increased awareness and understanding of the National Climate Change Policy and Adaptation Plan among key stakeholders, including officials, traditional leaders, youth groups, women's groups, NGOs, local communities, and the media.

The devastating impact of climate change on environmental degradation, sand mining, and quarrying in Shama were highlighted. Stakeholders agreed on the urgent need for better climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies.

- The ReDIAL project closed out successfully with the introduction of innovative multi-crop thresher technology, the FarmSense Soil Testing kit, the adoption of climate smart agricultural practices by beneficiaries, among others key achievements.

Community Development

- The WeACT project closed out successfully. A total of 400 women had their knowledge on financial stability, record keeping and savings enhanced, enabling them to make informed decisions and manage their finances effectively. The leadership skills of these women were also improved to help them be self-reliant and confident in taking on leadership roles within their communities. Other 240 women were trained in soap making so they could diversify their livelihoods and engage in economic activities during the off-cocoa season.

- Our efforts to transform Internal Revenue Mobilization in Shama District Assembly yielded a 251.4% increase in revenue collection. The Assembly's revenue collection increased from GHS 801,980.98 in 2019 to GHS 2,620,253.13 as of July 2024. There was also a 75.2% increase in property registration. 4,534 additional properties and businesses were identified and evaluated, which increased the base value of properties documented in 2019.

- FoN provided technical training on Geographic Information System (GIS) software for the officers of the Physical Planning Department of the Shama District Assembly. This enhanced staff digital skills and competence, enabling the department to digitally classify lands, prepare better layouts, and create two local digital plans for the first time. As a result, the department can now query and analyze plans and spatial data independently, reducing processing time for permit applications.

- With targeted training sessions and community outreach programs, we

empowered citizens to understand the importance of taxation and its role in supporting local development. We worked closely with market women, youth, and vocational associations, as well as Community Information Centers (CICs), to disseminate tax information and promote a culture of tax compliance. As a result, many informal taxpayers in the Shama District, who were previously skeptical about paying taxes, began to see the value in contributing to the development of their communities through payment of their taxes.

Chapter 1

Natural Resources & Assets Governance

Friends of the Nation's Natural Resources & Assets actions aim at promoting rights-based inclusive and accountable natural resources and environmental governance practices and campaigns for sustainable Climate-Smart ecosystems and efficient use of natural assets. We focus on enhancing active citizenship, constituency strengthening and holding conversations for transparent and improved natural resources management in the marine, coastal landscapes, and extractive sectors particularly, areas of productive and healthy Blue Economy, mining, oil and gas, sustainable seafood, and food security.

Fisheries

1.0 Strengthening Fisheries Governance in Ghana



Ghana's marine fisheries sector generates some $1 billion in revenue annually and supports 2.8 million livelihoods. However, the sector faces significant threats from illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing, jeopardizing coastal communities' livelihoods, food security, and biodiversity.

Friends of the Nation, in 2024 embarked on a critical mission to fortify Ghana's marine fisheries sector from four approaches. Number one was to enhance the public's understanding of sustainable fisheries governance, two, to strengthen the prosecution of IUU infractions, three, to engage in participatory monitoring of the adjudication of fisheries infractions, and four, to strengthen the advocacy capacity of 2 national fisher associations to improve institutional resilience and participate in co-management of the fisheries sector.

This chapter delves into how FoN contributed to securing the livelihoods and sustainability of the fisheries sector in the year under review, using four different approaches.

1.1.1 Promoting Sustainable Fishing Practices in Ghana through Media Engagement

In our efforts to promote sustainable fishing practices and combat IUU fishing, we leveraged the power of media to raise awareness about the importance of sustainable fishing practices. We organized a national TV and radio program, which reached over 5,000 viewers and listeners. The program highlighted the importance of sustainable fishing practices and the negative impacts of IUU fishing on coastal communities. The program featured key stakeholders, including fisheries experts, community leaders, and government officials, who shared their insights and experiences on sustainable fishing practices. The program also provided a platform for fishermen and coastal communities to share their stories and concerns about IUU fishing.

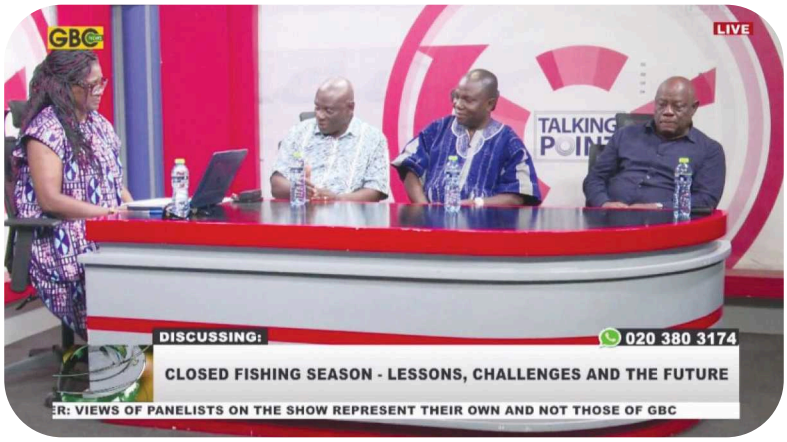


Figure 2. A conversation of Closed Fishing Season on Ghana Television (GTV).



Figure 3. A conversation of Closed Fishing Season on Ghana Television (GTV)

The impact of this initiative has been significant, with raised awareness about the importance of sustainable fishing practices. The program also generated thousands of engagements on social media, demonstrating the effectiveness of media engagement in promoting sustainable fishing practices. The program's reach and impact extended beyond the immediate audience, with many viewers and listeners sharing the information

with their networks.

One key lesson learned from this experience is that media engagement is crucial for promoting sustainable fishing practices and combating IUU fishing. This underscores the importance of leveraging media platforms to raise awareness about the importance of sustainable fishing practices. Media engagement provides a powerful tool for reaching a wide audience, influencing public opinion, and shaping behavior.

As we move forward, we project that our continued engagement with the media will lead to even greater awareness about the importance of sustainable fishing practices and a further reduction in IUU fishing activities. We plan to build on the success of this initiative by developing more targeted and effective media campaigns, leveraging social media platforms, and collaborating with influencers and community leaders to promote sustainable fishing practices.

1.1.2 Strengthening fisheries prosecutorial chain

In 2024, Friends of the Nation strengthened the capacity of law enforcement agencies to combat Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated (IUU) fishing. To achieve this, we established a core team of trained Marine Police Officers who served as key facilitators, sharing their knowledge and skills with peers and personnel from various agencies, including the Fisheries Enforcement Unit, Ghana Navy, Monitoring, Control, and Surveillance unit of the Fisheries Commission, and coastal Police Officers.

These training sessions encompassed critical areas such as fisheries laws, ecological justification, compliance strategies, and effective enforcement techniques. Furthermore, joint-field exercises were conducted to enhance vessel strategies, beach combing, and other vital skills, ultimately fortifying their role in fisheries governance under the Improving Fisheries Governance (IFG) Project.

The collaboration and availability of these focal officers within the Marine Police ensured the expansion of these training efforts, creating a ripple effect that bolsters the overall capacity of law enforcement agencies in combating IUU fishing.

1.1.3 Monitoring of IUU cases in court

The enhancement of enforcement officers' knowledge translated into the arrest and prosecution of offenders of fisheries laws. Friends of the Nation in 2024 was at the local circuit courts for fisheries infractions, to monitor and follow the trial of cases brought to the court for adjudication.

The following are our observations: Between 2022 and 2024, out of 24 fisheries infractions monitored at the courts, nine (9) were being prosecuted. Fourteen (14) got resolved, and one (1) was under investigation. Of these numbers, 17 emanated from the Western Command, and the remaining 7 originated from the Eastern Command of the Marine, Ports and Railways department of the Ghana Police Service.



Figure 4 . A cross section of Coastal police in a workshop on effective enforcement and compliance strategy

Below is a breakdown of the infractions and their status.

Table 2: Status of IUU cases monitored

Cases	Under investigation	Pending before court	Resolved
Industrial Trawlers		*3*	*W-*
Semi Industrial vessels		4	1
Artisanal vessel (Canoe)	1	2	13
Total	1	9	14
		Grand Total	**24**

In 2024, Friends of the Nation hired the services of a legal consultant to assess the adjudication of fisheries cases brought before the Western Region fisheries court.

The consultant found the following gaps and made recommendations to improve the prosecutorial chain.

Table 3: Gaps and recommendations to improve IUU prosecutorial Chain

Prosecutorial Chain	Challenge	Recommendation
Investigations	1. Two cases in which recorded convictions could have been more in-depth. 2. There was a lack of adequate evidence and key witnesses	Capacity of investigators and the marine police should be enhanced through structured and regular training
Prosecution	1. There was an instance of a wrong charge preferred against some accused persons which resulted in their acquittal and discharge 2. Lack of adequate evidence, such as the absence of a laboratory or other suitable report to establish that an injury was caused by dynamite rather than a shark attack. 3. Hearsay evidence and failure to procure key witnesses proved detrimental to prosecution	Training programmes for prosecutors in gathering evidence, interviewing / preparation of witnesses and conduct of trials. More involvement by the Attorney-General's Office in such investigations and prosecutions.

The courts	1.Turnaround time for case adjudication were longer. Available evidence suggests cases could have been adjudicated on more expeditiously 2. Given the prevalence of the scourge of IUU fishing, stiffer sentences could serve as a deterrent.	Specialist courts be dedicated for IUU fishing prosecutions Stakeholders should regularly monitor and/or track investigation and prosecution of IUU fishing cases to identify possible gaps in the prosecutorial chain Stiffer sentences and sustained education on the scourge of IUU fishing could further strengthen current interventions

As we move forward, FoN will continue monitoring prosecution of IUU infractions in court. We believe that it will lead to even more effective prosecution of fisheries offenses and a further reduction in IUU fishing activities. We will also explore ways to publicly disclose the outcomes of adjudication, serving as a deterrent to fishermen who engage in IUU fishing. By making this information publicly available, we aim to increase transparency and demonstrate that IUU fishing is a high-risk venture that carries significant consequences. This will contribute to the long-term sustainability of Ghana's fisheries sector and the livelihoods of coastal communities.

1.1.4 Takeaways from Our Fight Against IUU Fishing

Despite our progress in combating IUU fishing, challenges persist due to weak coordination between enforcement agencies and the judiciary, insufficient funding, and limited trained personnel. Coastal communities require persistent education and awareness-raising efforts that promote ocean literacy, emphasizing the ecological importance of fisheries regulations and the interconnectedness of human and ocean health. This will ensure that they have a deep and lasting understanding of the critical role these regulations play in sustaining the health of marine ecosystems, the

livelihoods that depend on them, and the overall well-being of their communities.

To improve the fight against IUU fishing, several key strategies can be employed. These include strengthening collaborative enforcement among the Fisheries Enforcement Unit, Ghana Navy, and other agencies to improve prosecution efforts. Implementing pre-fishing inspections will help prevent IUU fishing, while providing specialized training for prosecutors, judges, and law enforcement officers will improve evidence-gathering and presentation during adjudication.

Engaging coastal communities in reporting violations and promoting sustainable fisheries management will also be crucial. Our monitoring and evaluation of IUU fishing prosecutions have provided valuable insights, and our ongoing analysis of fisheries infraction cases will further provide a solid foundation to inform and shape our strategy to combat IUU fishing.

The Marine Police Department's initiative to deploy trained officers has been instrumental in enhancing the capacity of coastal officers and the

Fisheries Commission's enforcement unit. Sharing expertise and experience is crucial in promoting sustainable fisheries and ensuring the long-term health of marine resources.

1.1.5 Empowering Fishers and Processors through Co-Management and Capacity Strengthening

As key stakeholders in the sector, the National Fish Processors and Traders Association (NAFPTA) and the Ghana National Canoe Fishermen Council (GNCFC) play a crucial role in promoting sustainable fishing practices and advocating for the rights of fishers and processors. By being part of co-management initiatives, these associations benefit from increased participation in decision-making processes, improved access to markets and resources, and enhanced capacity to negotiate with policymakers and other stakeholders. As a collective voice for fishers and processors, they also advocate for pro-poor policies, livelihood improvements, and better working conditions, ultimately contributing to a more equitable and sustainable fisheries sector.



Figure 5 Capacity strengthening meeting of NAFPTA leadership

To enhance co-management and the sustainability of Ghana's fisheries sector, Friends of the Nation (FoN) collaborated with top executives from the National Fish Processors and Traders Association (NAFPTA) and the Ghana National Canoe Fishermen Council (GNCFC) to conduct an organizational health check, and by this gained significant capacity strengthening. This support has enabled them to improve their governance, management, and advocacy capacities, placing them in good standing to effectively represent the interests of their members.

Specifically, the associations have gained the capacity to meet their annual obligations, including filing returns with statutory institutions, such as the Registrar General's Department and the Ghana Revenue Authority. They are now able to prepare and submit project and annual reports, as well as financial reports, to stakeholders, including donors and government agencies. The associations have also been empowered to participate in advocacy efforts for responsible fisheries, including engaging with policymakers, industry stakeholders, and communities to promote sustainable fishing practices. Furthermore, they are now operating in accordance with their constitutions, ensuring democratic governance and tolerance for diverse views among their members.

One key lesson learned from this experience is that associations are vehicles for change, but they require continuous capacity strengthening to promote sustainable fishing practices, improve livelihoods, and enhance food security. Providing ongoing support to fisher associations is crucial for enabling them to combat IUU fishing effectively.

As we move forward, we project that our continued support for capacity strengthening will lead to even more effective transparency, promote sustainable fishing practices and result in a further reduction in IUU fishing activities.

1.1.6 Making Strides in Marine Mammal Conservation in Ghana

In 2024, our project, "Enhancing Cetacean Conservation in Ghana," achieved a breakthrough in partnership with the Centre of Coastal Management (CCM-ACECoR) of the University of Cape Coast. We successfully strengthened the marine bycatch network, training 21 active members in cetacean identification and digital data collection. This milestone has enabled real-time data collection and tracking of cetacean landings, bridging a critical data gap in Ghana's marine conservation efforts.

Our community awareness initiatives reached nine hotspots, engaging fishers, women processors, and traders. We promoted responsible fishing practices and marine biodiversity conservation through a high-impact billboard campaign, and celebrated World Fisheries Day 2024 with the Fisheries Commission and local fishers. The signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Ministry of Fisheries and Aquaculture Development cemented our partnership and ensured the sustainability of our project's gains.

The impact of our project has been significant. We have improved data collection and monitoring of cetacean landings, enhanced community awareness and engagement, and strengthened partnerships with key stakeholders. Our efforts have laid the groundwork for policy reforms, promoting sustainable fishing practices and reducing cetacean bycatch.

In 2025, we will build on this momentum, advocating for policy commitments to reduce cetacean bycatch and mainstream cetacean conservation into the proposed draft policy on small-scale fisheries. We will provide the Fisheries Commission with real-time cetacean bycatch and directed catch geo-tracking landings, improving Ghana's reporting to the International Whaling Commission.

Our project's success will have far-reaching implications, driving behavioral change among fishers, influencing policy direction, and providing learning opportunities for other West African countries. By working together, we are transforming cetacean conservation in Ghana, protecting the country's marine environment, and ensuring a sustainable future for generations to come.



MINING

Advancing transparency and accountability, promoting community rights.

Friends of the Nation promotes responsible mining, transparency and accountability on the returns on mining at the sub national level. The year under review saw FoN push for inclusivity of women's rights to the benefits of mining, tracking the sustainability of corporate social investments of mining companies on catchment communities, building capacities of lithium catchment communities to assert their environmental, social and economic right as well as supporting communities to follow timber and other mineral royalties. This chapter explores the impact of our interventions on our target constituents in mining areas in Ghana.

1.2.1 Empowering Communities in Environmental Decision-Making

Ghana discovered lithium in commercial quantities at Ewoyaa in the Mfantseman Municipality in the Central Region in 2017. As has been the approach of mining companies, the exploratory stage did not happen without abuse of local people's rights and their right to free prior informed consent.



Figure 6: Training of the Ewoyaa Community on the Lithium project's ESIS

Friends of the Nation stepped in on 2022 building the capacity of the management members of the Mfantseman and Abura Asebu Kwamankese District, traditional leaders, land and crop owners on land rights, sustainable environmental governance, livelihoods protection, and how to negotiate for a fair and adequate compensation.

As of 2024 December, Atlantic Lithium, the company leading the processes towards lithium mining, has been granted a Mining Lease, Mine Operating Permit, Water Use Permit, Environmental Protection Agency Permit and the go ahead from the Mfantseman Municipal Assembly to carry on with the development of the Ewoyaa Lithium Project, pending the ratification of the Mining Lease Agreement by the Parliament of Ghana. The company declared a mining area, and started talks with land and farm owners for the payment of compensation, through a Compensation Negotiations Committee (CNC), as specified in LI2175. It has also established the Resettlement Negotiation Committee (RNC), after the company declared that the Ewoya and Krampakrom communities will be resettled to make way for the project.



Figure 7: Ewoyaa resident questions some decisions by project proponents in the Lithium project's ESIS

Friends of the Nation (FoN) continued its engagement with local communities in the Mfantseman Municipality and the Abura Asebu Kwamankese Districts. In our engagements, we were guided by the United Nations' principles of Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC), which emphasizes the importance of obtaining the consent of indigenous peoples and local communities before undertaking any development project that may affect their rights and interests. By applying the FPIC principles, we ensured that our engagements with the communities were inclusive, transparent, and respectful of their rights and interests.



Figure 8 : Anokyi Residents feeling empowered after training on the Lithium project's ESIS

We focused on empowering the 11 catchment communities to participate in environmental decisions-making - following the Environmental Protection Agency's approval of the Ewoyaa Lithium Project's Environmental and Social Impact Statement, negotiate for fair and adequate compensation as enshrined in LI. 2175 for their crops, land and structures to be impacted by the project, as well as and participatory monitoring.



Figure 9: Residents of Krampakrom feeling empowered after training on the Lithium project's ESIS

Through Learning and sharing exchange visit to Tarkwa and Obuasi, series of community engagements, we empowered over 625 community opinion leaders comprising members of the Ewoyaa Lithium Project's Compensation Negotiation Committee, farmers, women and youth, religious leaders, landowners, traditional authorities, assembly members and local government officials.

Our experience with the Ewoyaa

Lithium Project has underscored the importance of community participation and monitoring at all levels of the project's 12 years life so as to ensure the project's long-term sustainability. We recognize that empowering local communities to participate in environmental decision-making and monitoring is crucial for responsible and sustainable mining practices, especially for rare earth minerals as lithium.

As we look to the future, we are committed to sustaining and deepening our engagement with local communities, ensuring that their concerns and interests are integrated into the project's implementation. By promoting community participation, transparency, and accountability, we aim to contribute to the Ewoyaa Lithium Project's success and demonstrate best practices in responsible and sustainable mining in Ghana.

Our success in 2024 would not have been possible without the hard work and dedication of our team, partners, community members, Environmental Protection Agency, Lands Commission, and Atlantic Lithium Company ltd. We are grateful for the support and cooperation we have received and look forward to continuing our work in promoting responsible and sustainable mining practices in Ghana.

1.2.2 Strengthening Minerals Revenue Management for Effective Local Governance



Figure 10: The AAKDA Chief Executive Hon. Obiri Awuah (In white) seeks clarity from Planning Officer from the Tarkwa Nsuaem Municipal Assembly on mineral Revenue Management

In Ghana, the Local Governance Act empowers Metropolitan, Municipal, and District Assemblies to diversify revenue streams and improve service delivery. To support this effort, our organization partnered with the Integrated Social Development Centre (ISODEC) to organize training sessions and engagements with Mfantseman and Abura Aseibu Kwamankese Municipal Assemblies, as well as impacted communities.

These engagements highlighted key lessons, including the importance of transparency and accountability in minerals revenue management, effective collaboration between stakeholders, building capacity and strengthening institutional frameworks, and community engagement and participation in decision-making processes.

By applying these lessons, we can promote sustainable local development in Ghana. Effective minerals revenue management requires transparency, accountability, and collaboration among stakeholders. Building capacity and strengthening institutional frameworks is essential for managing minerals revenue and community expectations, ultimately promoting sustainable local development.

Our efforts have contributed to the development of local governance in Ghana, demonstrating the importance of effective minerals revenue management in promoting sustainable development.

1.2.3 Promoting equitable mineral revenue allocation, transparency and accountability

Ghana's mining sector is a crucial contributor to the country's economy, but illegal small-scale mining practices have devastating environmental and social consequences. To address this, the Minerals Development Fund Act was passed in 2016 to provide financial resources for mining communities.



Figure 11:The monitoring team inspecting a KG block at Odumasi in Wassa East District

In 2024, Friends of Nation empowered 192 citizen groups to monitor and influence gender-responsive budgeting and ensure equitable allocation of mineral revenues. Through training workshops, these citizens tracked mineral revenue allocation, ensuring projects addressed community needs and held duty bearers accountable.

The monitoring exercise revealed shortcomings in community participation and transparency. Citizens demanded greater transparency, including public disclosure of contract sums and funding sources. The local government demonstrated increased commitment to utilizing mineral and timber royalties for inclusive development, pledging to enhance citizens' participation, transparency, and accountability. This initiative promotes transparency and accountability in Ghana's mining sector, ensuring that mineral revenues benefit local communities.



Figure 12: Monitoring team interacting with a representative of Manso Amenfi Senior High School.

Chapter 2

Environment and Climate Justice

The Environment & Climate Change actions are designed as a cross cutting to contribute to global efforts at combating drivers of climate crisis – human-induced actions and heat trapping gases warming the earth, oceans, and atmosphere. We focus on promoting environmental and climate Justice through constituency strengthening, multi-stakeholder conversations and actions that trigger investments in nature-based solutions, and ecosystem restoration as safe conditions for sustainable living.

2.0 ENVIRONMENT & CLIMATE CHANGE



FoN in 2024 vigorously supported selected constituents to identify factors that contribute to the deteriorating climate. Awareness was created on activities such as sand wining, quarrying, deforestation, soil erosion, unsustainable farming practices, among others, and how our constituents could build resilience. This chapter highlights how FoN and its partners did it.

2.1 Building Climate Resilience in Ghana's Aquaculture Sector

Climate change poses significant threats to Ghana's aquaculture sector, exacerbating flooding and disrupting the livelihoods of fish farmers. In the Ellembelle District of the Western Region, fish farmers have been battling flooding, resulting in substantial losses of fish stock and undermining food security. In response, Friends of the Nation partnered with the African Centre for Energy Policy to support 31 fish farmers in building their resilience to climate change. Through training and capacity-building, farmers were equipped with innovative strategies to mitigate the impacts of climate change, including the use of climate-resilient infrastructure and sustainable fish farming practices. To further enhance resilience, we procured and distributed wire mesh to fence 52 fishponds, covering a combined area of 6,059 square meters, directly benefiting 29 fish farmers. This initiative demonstrates our commitment to promoting climate justice and resilience in Ghana's aquaculture sector. By supporting fish farmers in adapting to climate change, we are helping to protect their livelihoods, promote food security, and contribute to a more sustainable and equitable future.



Figure 13 : : Aquaculture farmer in Ellembelle trained on climate smart fish farming.



Figure 13a, 13b, 13c: Ponds secured with wire mesh

2.2 Amplifying Climate Actions in Shama District



Figure 14: Raising awareness on climate change using drama at Shama.

In 2024, Friends of the Nation (FoN) took proactive steps to address this challenge in Shama District. We increased awareness and understanding of the National Climate Change Policy and Adaptation Plan among key stakeholders, including officials, traditional leaders, youth groups, women's groups, NGOs, local communities, and the media.

Through engaging discussions, we highlighted the devastating impact of climate change on environmental degradation, sand mining, and quarrying in Shama. These activities contribute significantly to air and water pollution, soil erosion, and biodiversity loss. We also emphasized the socio-economic impacts of climate change on agriculture, health, and the economy in Shama, including flooding, drought, and late onset of rains.

Stakeholders agreed on the urgent need for better climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies. To intensify public awareness, FoN partnered with the Shama District Assembly to employ innovative approaches. We educated over 400 youth, women, and community leaders through cultural dance and drama performances, showcasing practical adaptation and mitigation strategies. Additionally, we showcased artworks created by students from Shama Senior High School, visually representing the effects of climate change.



Figure 15:: Showcasing artwork by Shama SHS during awareness raising campaign in Shama.

Our efforts have contributed significantly to promoting climate action in Shama

District. By empowering local communities with knowledge and skills,

we are reducing vulnerability to climate change and promoting sustainable development. Our initiatives demonstrate the power of collaborative efforts in addressing the pressing issue of climate change.

2.3 ReDIAL Project Successfully Closes, Marking Four Years of Sustainable Agricultural Development in Ghana

In October 2024, the ReDIAL project, co-funded by the European Union and FoN, came to a successful close, marking the end of a four-year journey to improve agricultural productivity and livelihoods of smallholder farmers in Ghana. Implemented by FoN, with support from KNUST and TBG, the project consisted of six components designed to drive sustainable agricultural development across five districts in Ghana, specifically: Yendi Municipality of the Northern Region, Techiman Municipality of the Bono-East Region, Ejura-Sekyedumase of the Ashanti Region, Sefwi-Wiawso Municipality of the Western North Region, and Kwahu Afram Plains North of the Eastern Region, leaving a lasting legacy of sustainable agricultural practices and improved livelihoods for smallholder farmers in Ghana.



Figure 16: A multi crop thresher at work in Techiman.



Figure 17:: Multi crop thresher threshes at market ready quality.

One of the project's standout achievements was the introduction of innovative multi-crop thresher technology. This game-changing innovation reduced post-harvest grain losses by an impressive 98%, improved grain quality, and boosted farmers' productivity. Ten multi-crop crops were deployed, providing free threshing services to 1,040 farmers and training 215 stakeholders on thresher technology.

ReDIAL also produced 30 Soil Fertility Profile maps, covering 12,725,064.63 hectares of agricultural land, and introduced FarmSense soil testing technology to 1,006 stakeholders. This empowered farmers to make informed decisions on crop cultivation and soil fertility management, leading to sustainable use of organic fertilizers and increased crop yields.



Figure 18: ReDIAL projects' Farm Sense soil testing tool kit being tested by Agric Extension Officers at Sefwi

The project promoted the uptake of climate-smart agriculture practices, educating over 6,877 farmers and stakeholders on sustainable land management and climate-smart agriculture practices. Six demonstration farms were established, and 1,417 farmers were trained in organic compost and liquid production. As a result, about 60% of beneficiaries adopted climate-smart agriculture and organic composting practices.

ReDIAL introduced Village Savings and Loans Associations, providing a viable self-financing scheme for smallholder farmers. Over 581 members saved and accessed loans, investing in farming and livelihood diversification. The project also built capacity of 659 farmers in livelihood diversification skills.



Figure 19: ReDIAL project's Village Saving and Loans Association Scheme in practice in Techiman

ReDIAL established five multi-stakeholder dialogue platforms, providing a platform for stakeholders to discuss and propose solutions to agriculture development issues. This enhanced stakeholder participation, inclusiveness, and collaboration in agriculture development decision-making. To safeguard the long-term impact of the ReDIAL project, Post-ReDIAL Management Committees were established in each project zone. These committees assumed responsibility for managing the project's assets, including threshers, public address systems, and FarmSense kits. This strategic move ensured the continued benefit of these resources to smallholder farmers beyond the project's closure.

Read more about the project on *www.redial.fonghana.org*

Chapter 3

Community Development

FoN's Community Development actions are structured at promoting holistic grassroot development that is grounded in the principles of social justice, human rights, inclusivity, empowerment, self-determination and collective action for human security and dignity. We focus on enhancing Open Governance and active citizenship at all levels to foster transparency, accountability, and mutual interfaces between rights holders and duty bearers. While at that, we pay particular attention to raising constituencies and dialogue platforms.

3.0 EQUITY, TRANSPARENCY, ACCOUNTABILITY

State resources are limited, restrict people the needed opportunities for development at all levels. To ensure the limited resources are judiciously used, equity, transparency and accountability are required to ensure everyone gets a fair share of the state resources across value chains.

Friends of the Nation in 2024 empowered women in cocoa growing areas to assert their social and economic rights, supported initiatives that promoted tax equity, and contributed to digitalization of social and economic services at the subnational level. This chapters delves into how FoN and its partners did it.



Figure 20: Women Cocoa Farmers discussing unpaid care work.

3.1 Enhancing Skills Development, Entrepreneurship, and Legal Literacy for Women Cocoa Farmers

The Women's Economic Advancement for Collective Transformation-WeACT project was a five-year initiative supported by Global Affairs Canada and Oxfam in Ghana. This intervention sought to address the gender-specific barriers to women's leadership, including young women, limited access to markets, land and unpaid work in the agriculture and informal economy of cocoa sectors in the Western and Western North Regions of Ghana.



Figure 21: Faustina Kobina is a beneficiary of the WeACT Project's entrepreneurship program

In 2024, Friends of the Nation (FoN) continued to empower women cocoa farmers under the WEACT project, providing gender-responsive skills development trainings that focused on transformative leadership, business acumen, and negotiation skills. A total of 400 women were trained, enhancing their knowledge on financial stability, record keeping, and savings, enabling them to make informed decisions and manage their finances effectively.

The training also improved their leadership skills, making them self-reliant and confident in taking on leadership roles within their communities. Additionally, 240 women were trained in soap making, enabling them to diversify their livelihoods and engage in economic activities during the off-cocoa season. This training not only provided them with an alternative source of income but also helped to reduce their dependence on cocoa farming alone.

To foster entrepreneurship, the project provided financial assistance to selected entrepreneurs, helping them overcome financial barriers and kick-start their ventures. This support enabled women to turn their business ideas into reality, creating jobs and generating income for themselves and their families. Through the WEACT project, FoN has contributed to enhancing economic empowerment, well-being, and inclusive economic growth for women and young girls in the cocoa value chain. We have promoted positive masculinity practices and behaviors, leading to a reverse in gender

roles and appreciation for unpaid care work undertaken by women. For instance, our men's shopping and cooking competitions have encouraged men to take on domestic responsibilities, reducing the burden on women and promoting a more equitable distribution of household chores.

Our efforts have also increased women's participation in leadership positions, with several women elected and appointed to community leadership roles. The implementation of the Legal Literacy Volunteer model has bridged the gap of low representation of women in decision-making positions and changed perceptions about women's roles in social, political, and economic domains. We are proud of the progress made through the WEACT project and look forward to continuing our efforts to empower women cocoa farmers, promoting their financial independence and empowerment.

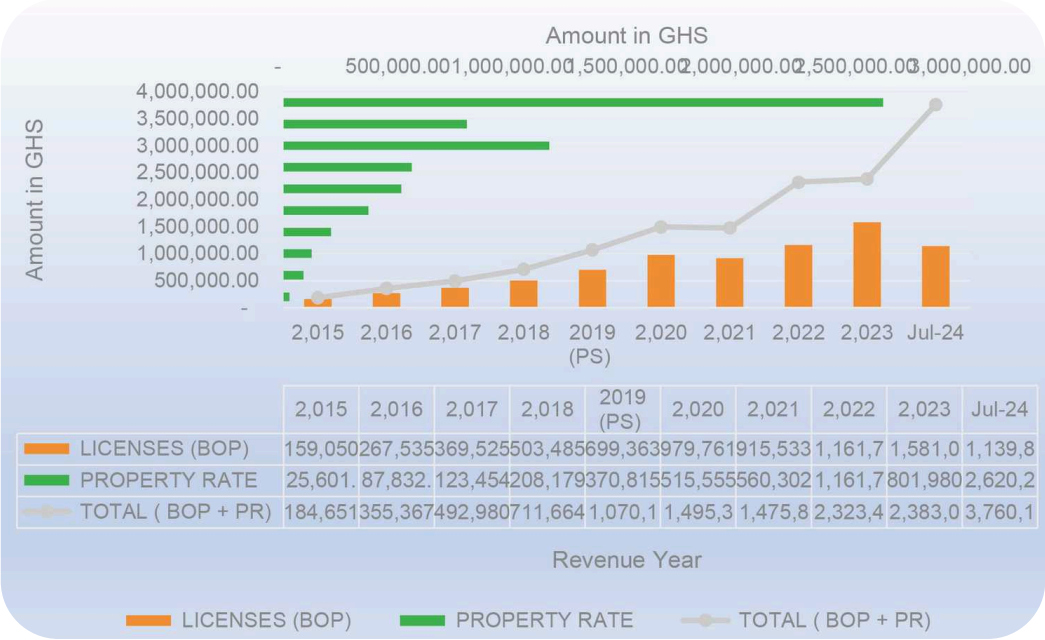
3.2 Transforming Internal Revenue Mobilization in Shama District Assembly

As we reflect on our work in 2024, we are proud to highlight the significant impact of our "Promoting Progressive Property Taxation and Tax Compliance in Ghana" Project in Shama District. The project, implemented through our innovative 'Shama Model', has transformed the internal revenue mobilization of the Shama District Assembly.

The Shama Model, built on four key dimensions of social accountability, has been instrumental in driving this transformation. By empowering citizens with skills, knowledge, and platforms to participate in decision-making processes, the Shama Model creates a more inclusive and responsive governance system.

Our project has yielded impressive results, with a 251.4% increase in revenue collection. The Assembly's revenue collection increased from GHS 801,980.98 in 2019 to GHS 2,620,253.13 as of July 2024. This significant increase is a testament to the effectiveness of the Shama Model in enhancing revenue mobilization.

Furthermore, our project has led to a 75.2% increase in property registration. 4,534



	2,015	2,016	2,017	2,018	2019 (PS)	2,020	2,021	2,022	2,023	Jul-24
LICENSES (BOP)	159,050	267,535	369,525	503,485	699,363	979,761	915,533	1,161,7	1,581,0	1,139,8
PROPERTY RATE	25,601.	87,832.	123,454	208,179	370,815	515,555	560,302	1,161,7	801,980	2,620,2
TOTAL (BOP + PR)	184,651	355,367	492,980	711,664	1,070,1	1,495,3	1,475,8	2,323,4	2,383,0	3,760,1

Figure 22 : Revenue from Property Rate and License (BOP) Before and After the Project Start

additional properties and businesses were identified and evaluated, increasing the base value of properties documented in 2019. This expansion of the tax base has contributed significantly to the increase in revenue collection.

In addition to these quantitative gains, our project has also led to improved taxpayer attitude and compliance. Voluntary walk-ins by residents/property owners to enquire and pay their taxes have increased, indicating a shift in attitude towards tax compliance. This change in attitude is a critical component of sustainable revenue mobilization.

The total amount collected in 2023 was GHS 801,980.98, approximately $53,465. As of July 2024, the total amount collected was GHS 2,620,253.13, approximately $174,683.

Our project has also led to a 70% improvement in skills and knowledge in using GIS software for local plan preparation, data collection, and more. The development of local plans for Assorko and Ohiamadwen communities has increased available local plans from 38 to 40. Thirty members were engaged, and 22 physical development permits worth GHS 86,762.00 were approved.

We established and inducted a 15-member Domestic Revenue Mobilization Forum, comprising 11 males and 4 females. This forum has played a crucial role in promoting domestic revenue mobilization in the district.



Figure 23:Number of Properties and Businesses Documented by the Budget Unit from 2019 to July 2024

Our project generated and utilized gender-disaggregated data on residential properties and businesses for revenue mobilization. We found that there were 6,646 properties, with 5,317 male-owned and 1,329 female-owned. Additionally, there were 2,375 businesses, with 1,663 male-owned and 712 female-owned.

In terms of the revenue breakdown, 70% of the revenue collected came from corporate sources, amounting to GHS 1,833,718.69. The remaining 30% came from individual sources, totaling GHS 785,879.44.

As we look to the future, we are committed to sustaining this momentum through continued engagement, strengthened collaboration, improved data management, and digitization of revenue collection. We believe that our Shama Model has the potential to be replicated in other districts, contributing to improved governance and revenue mobilization across Ghana.

3.3 Digitalizing Spatial Planning in Shama District

The Physical Planning Department of Shama District has undergone a remarkable transformation from manual to digital processes, thanks to the "Promoting Progressive Property Taxation and Tax Compliance in Ghana" Project. Prior to this intervention, the department relied heavily on manual methods, hindering accurate spatial data capture and in-depth analysis.

The Project's intervention in 2022 bridged the technology and capacity gaps by providing technical training on Geographic Information System (GIS) software. This enhanced staff digital skills and competence, enabling the department to digitally classify lands, prepare better layouts, and create two local digital plans for the first time.

The department can now query and analyze plans and spatial data independently, reducing processing time for permit applications. Radio programs and jingles sponsored by the Project increased public awareness and compliance with permit acquisition rules. The Planning Committee revised their meeting schedule, enabling them to review permit applications more frequently and reduce delays.

The Project's impact e0xtends beyond improved service delivery, demonstrating increased citizen compliance with development control rules and positive impact on the communities. The successful digital local plan for two communities showcases the department's progress toward digital transformation.

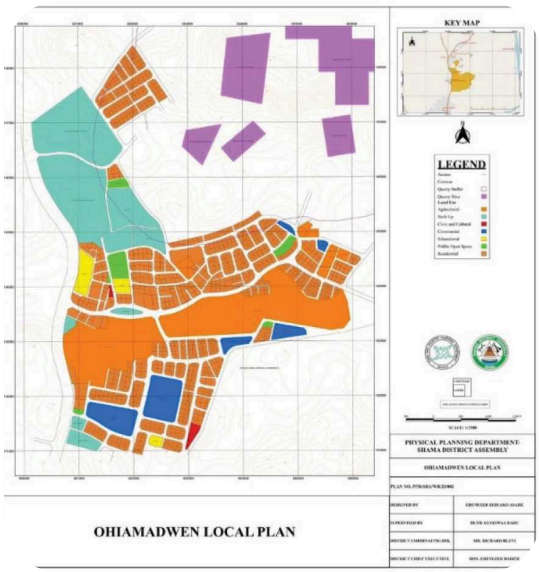


Figure 24: Digital Map -Local Plan for Ohiamadwen

This transformation has boosted citizen confidence, leading to a significant increase in permit applications from approximately 200 to 250 within a year.

3.4 Empowering Citizens to Promote Tax Compliance

In Ghana, paying taxes is a daunting task for informal taxpayers, including market women, self-employed youth, and vocational associations. To address this challenge, we employed a multi-faceted approach to promote tax education, advocacy, and accountability.

Through targeted training sessions and community outreach programs, we empowered citizens to understand the importance of taxation and its role in supporting local development. We worked closely with market women, youth, and vocational associations, as well as Community Information Centers (CICs), to disseminate tax information and promote a culture of tax compliance.

Additionally, we trained citizens on ethical tax collection attitudes, which helped to make tax payment easier and more accommodating. This training emphasized the importance of transparency, fairness, and accountability in tax collection processes.

To further promote transparency and accountability, we organized radio programs and open fora where the Assembly accounted to the people on revenue generation, achievements, challenges, and the disbursement and use of public revenue generated. This provided citizens with a platform to engage with the Assembly and hold them accountable for the use of public funds.

To ensure sustained transparency and accountability, we also mounted accountability information billboards communicating public revenue and expenditures. These billboards provided citizens with easy access to information on how public funds were being utilized, promoting transparency and accountability.

Our approach yielded significant impacts. Many informal taxpayers, who were previously skeptical about paying taxes, began to see the value in contributing to the development of their communities. Tax awareness and education led to increased tax compliance, with many citizens voluntarily paying their taxes.

Overall, our approach demonstrates the potential of education, advocacy, and accountability in promoting tax compliance among informal taxpayers. By empowering citizens and promoting a culture of transparency and accountability, we can increase tax revenues and support local development initiatives.

4.0 Financial Statement

The graph below presents the financial position of FoN for the year 2024.

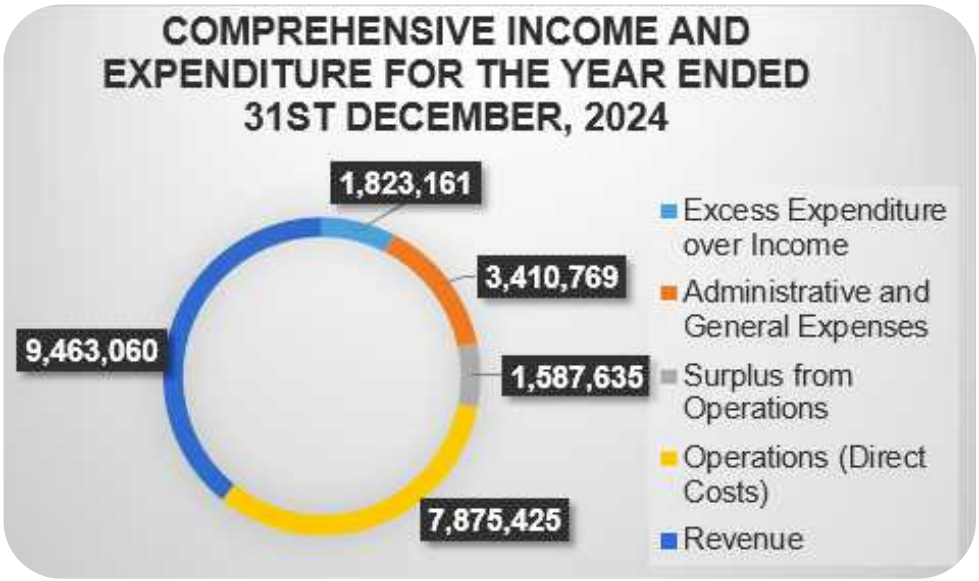


Figure 25 : Comprehensive income and expenditure for the year ended 31st december, 2024



Figure 26 : Financial position as of 31st december, 2024

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